

Whereas during the Border Patrol's 75-year history, Border Patrol Agents have been deputized as United States Marshals on numerous occasions;

Whereas the Border Patrol's highly trained and motivated personnel have also assisted in controlling civil disturbances, performing National security details, aided in foreign training and assessments, and responded with security and humanitarian assistance in the aftermath of numerous natural disasters;

Whereas the present force of over 8,000 agents, located in 146 stations under 21 sectors, is responsible for protecting more than 8,000 miles of international land and water boundaries;

Whereas, with the increase in drug-smuggling operations, the Border Patrol has also been assigned additional interdiction duties, and is the primary agency responsible for drug interdiction between ports-of-entry;

Whereas Border Patrol agents have a dual role of protecting the borders and enforcing immigration laws in a fair and humane manner; and

Whereas the Border Patrol has a historic mission of firm commitment to the enforcement of immigration laws, but also one fraught with danger, as illustrated by the fact that 86 agents and pilots have lost their lives in the line of duty—6 in 1998 alone: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That Congress recognizes the historical significance of the United States Border Patrol's founding and its 75 years of service to our great Nation.

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION 75—EXPRESSING THE STRONG OPPOSITION OF CONGRESS TO THE CONTINUED EGREGIOUS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD THE ESTABLISHMENT OF DEMOCRACY AND THE RULE OF LAW IN BELARUS AND CALLING ON PRESIDENT ALEXANDER LUKASHENKA TO ENGAGE IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OPPOSITION AND TO RESTORE THE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS OF THE BELARUSIAN PEOPLE

Mr. DURBIN (for himself and Mr. CAMPBELL) submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations:

S. CON. RES. 75

Whereas the United States has a vital interest in the promotion of democracy abroad and supports democracy and economic development in Belarus;

Whereas in the Fall of 1996, President Lukashenka devised a controversial referendum to impose a new constitution on Belarus and abolish the Parliament, replacing it with a rubber-stamp legislature;

Whereas Lukashenka illegally extended his own term of office to 2001 by an illegitimate referendum;

Whereas Belarus has effectively become an authoritarian police state, where human rights are routinely violated;

Whereas Belarusian economic development is stagnant and living conditions are deplorable;

Whereas in May 1999, the Belarusian opposition challenged Lukashenka's unconstitutional lengthening of his term by staging al-

ternative presidential elections, unleashing the government crackdown;

Whereas the leader of the opposition, Simyon Sharetsky, was forced to flee Belarus to the neighboring Baltic state of Lithuania in fear for his life;

Whereas several leaders of the opposition—Viktor Gonchar, Yuri Krasovsky, Yuri Zakharenka, Tamara Vinnikova, and other members of the opposition, have disappeared;

Whereas the Belarusian authorities harass and persecute the independent media and work to actively suppress the freedom of speech;

Whereas the former Prime Minister Mikhail Chygir, who was a candidate in the opposition's alternative presidential elections in May 1999, has been held in the pretrial detention on trumped up charges since April 1999;

Whereas President Lukashenka's government provoked the clashes between riot police and the demonstrators at the October 17, 1999, "Freedom March", which resulted in injuries to demonstrators and scores of illegal arrests;

Whereas President Lukashenka addressed a session of the Russian State Duma on October 26, 1999, advocating a merger between Russia and Belarus; and

Whereas Anatoly Lebedko, Chairman of the Committee for International Affairs of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, Nikolay Statkevich, leader of the Social Democratic Party, and Valery Shchukin, Deputy of the Supreme Council, were arrested and imprisoned for taking part in the Freedom March: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives concurring), That the Congress—

(1) condemns the current Belarusian regime;

(2) further condemns the arrests of Anatoly Lebedko, Nikolay Statkevich, and Valery Shchukin;

(3) is gravely concerned about the disappearances of Viktor Gonchar, Yuri Krasovsky, Yuri Zakharenka, Tamara Vinnikova, and other members of the opposition;

(4) calls for immediate dialogue between President Lukashenka and the Consultative Council of Belarusian opposition and the restoration of a civilian, democratically elected government in Belarus;

(5) calls for a duly constituted national legislature, the rule of law, and an independent judiciary;

(6) urges President Lukashenka to respect the human rights of all Belarusian citizens, including those members of the opposition who are currently being illegally detained in violation of their constitutional rights;

(7) further urges President Lukashenka to make good on his promise to hold free parliamentary elections in 2000;

(8) supports the appeal by the Consultative Council of Belarusian opposition parties to the Government of Russia, the State Duma, and the Federation Council for a cessation of support for Lukashenka's regime;

(9) calls on the international community to support the opposition by continuing to meet with the legitimately elected parliament; and

(10) calls on the President of the United States to continue to—

(A) fund travel to the United States by the Belarusian opposition figures;

(B) provide funding for the nongovernmental organizations in Belarus; and

(C) support information flows into Belarus.

• Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, in 1996, President Alexander Lukashenka imposed a new constitution on Belarus that effectively destroyed its nascent

democracy and returned that country to a Soviet-style police state. Human rights violations are routine and living conditions are deplorable because of the stagnant economy. Opposition leader Simyon Sharetsky fled to Vilnius, Lithuania.

The situation in Belarus has worsened dramatically in recent months for remaining members of the opposition. Some have disappeared, including Viktor Gonchar, Yuri Krasovsky, Yuri Zakharenka, and Tamara Vinnikova. Some have been arrested for taking part in the October 17, 1999 "Freedom march," including Anatoly Lebedko, Chairman of the Committee for International Affairs of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Belarus, Nikolay Statkevich, leader of the Social Democratic Party, and Valery Shchukin, Deputy of the Supreme Council.

Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia are very concerned about the direction Belarus has taken under the Lukashenka regime. Belarus' economy is apparently imploding, and neighboring countries are concerned about regional instability. Our recent experience with Slobodan Milosevic's Yugoslavia should make us all concerned about the implications of a ruthless dictator threatening stability in Europe.

Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia have successfully transformed themselves from Soviet-dominated Communist states to fully democratic market democracies integrated with the West and Western institutions. We must be sure that Belarus does not threaten the remarkable progress these stalwart countries have made in only 10 years since the fall of the Soviet empire.

Also troubling is a draft treaty that may be signed before the end of the year between Lukashenka and President Yeltsin to effect a political union between Russia and Belarus. All Western countries should be concerned that such a union would only hurt efforts to shore up Russia's economy and strengthen its fragile democracy.

That is why my colleague, Senator CAMPBELL, and I join together today to a resolution condemning the actions of the Lukashenka regime. This resolution—a companion measure to one introduced by our colleague in the House of Representatives, Representative SAM GEJDENSON—condemns the Lukashenka regime, the arrest of opposition figures and the disappearance of others; calls for a dialog between Lukashenka and the opposition, the restoration of a democratically-elected government and institutions; calls on the U.S. President to fund travel by Belarusian opposition figures and for non-governmental organizations in Belarus and to support information flows into Belarus. I call on my colleagues to join us in cosponsoring this resolution. •